



A Theology of Death: the Slave Trade, the Holocaust and Abortion – the Delusions of Religious Atheism

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*How long, O people, will you turn my glory into shame?
How long will you love delusions and seek false gods?*

PSALM 4:2

Abstract

A central thesis to the writings of the so-called New Atheists is that the advocates of all religions will eventually oppress and even kill their opponents; however, they fail to apply this proposition to themselves, to their own anti-theistic religiosity. The aim of this paper is to explore how an Enlightenment theology of death is rooted in religious atheism, a belief system that beguiles and deludes a particular group of people into defining another group of people as non- or sub-human, and open to exploitation and destruction. This has led, post-Reformation, to three Enlightenment mega-holocausts through the slave trade, through the holocaust of the Jews, and now through abortion. The roots of this are in the judgemental religious terrorism evidenced on both sides in the Reformation. This paper concludes that religion may be bad, atheism worse, but religious atheism is to be seen as the worst of all options: we must trust in the blood of the lamb, the one true living God incarnated in the Christ (who was fully human and at one with humanity from the moment of his conception) not in the blood of Enlightenment sacrifices numbering tens of millions.

Keywords

Religion, Enlightenment, Delusion, Slavery, Holocaust, Abortion

1. The New Atheists – the War on Religion

The scientist and media celebrity Richard Dawkins and the children's writer Phillip Pullman are probably the most famous exponents of so-called New Atheism. In the past people who claimed to be atheists usually kept themselves to themselves; most of them would be cynical towards people they classified as 'religious', but they did not attempt to convert. Most acknowledged a sort of logic that if there was no 'god' then meaning, reason, proof, value all became relative. Other New Atheists include the journalist and literary critic Christopher Hitchens (who describes himself as an 'anti-theist'), the philosopher and newspaper columnist A.C. Grayling, the journalist-writer Sam Harris, the novelist Martin Amis and the author and screen writer Ian McEwan. To name or classify someone as an atheist is dangerous. We are not necessarily in a position to pre-judge others; however, the New Atheists are characterized by a self-proclamation that they are atheists. Richard Dawkins and Phillip Pullman are an example of a contemporary intellectual trend amongst New Atheists, they have proposed in their writings that the exponents of all religions will eventually oppress and even kill their opponents, that religion *per se* should be done away with, as peaceably as possible.¹ This anti-God, anti-religion, proposition is essentially derived from two works: Pullman's explicitly atheistic anti-Narnia mythology aimed at children entitled *His Dark Materials*,² and Dawkins short anti-religion polemic, *The God Delusion*, which though lacking in any extended argument or considered systematic theo-logical analysis, has none the less sold, like Pullman's work, millions of copies world-wide. Dawkins contends that a supernatural creator almost certainly does not exist and that faith qualifies as a delusion – as a fixed false belief.³ Whilst Pullman advocates the death of God, Dawkins jumps from point to point across numerous disciplines simply to propose that anyone who claims to believe in a 'god', or those who are religious, are deluding themselves: there is no God for Dawkins, and religion, for him, is always theistic, and therefore delusory, a psychological sickness. Dawkins' opening chapter in *The God Delusion* is entitled 'A

¹ Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (London: Bantam Press, Transworld Publishers, 2006); see specifically, Chp. 8, §,2 'The Dark Side of Absolutism', pp. 323–325, and generally Chps. 8 & 9. Although recently some of these New Atheists have openly expressed support for using violence as a means of combating militant Islam, some of them also call for rescinding the tolerance of religious belief formerly characteristic of Western liberal democracies.

² Phillip Pullman, *His Dark Materials*, consisting of *Northern Lights* (London: Scholastic, 1995), *The Subtle Knife* (London: Scholastic, 1997) and *The Amber Spyglass* (London: Scholastic, 2000).

³ Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (2006), p. 5 and, Chp. 4 'Why There Almost Certainly is no God' pp. 137–189, see specifically, pp. 157–158.

Deeply Religious non-Believer',⁴ in it he talks about a quasi-mystical response to nature and the universe that is common amongst scientists and rationalists.⁵ He appears to acknowledge this religious impulse in humanity and how even when scientists label themselves as atheists they cannot cease to be what they consider to be religious, however, he does distinguish between what he calls Einsteinian religion from supernatural religion; he argues that although Albert Einstein, and Stephen Hawkins, invoke the name of God they are misunderstood by supernaturalists, they are using the term in an abstract manner.⁶ Superficial though their treatises are, Pullman and Dawkins do implicitly acknowledge, quite correctly, that something is wrong with religion, that religion can be considered as human generated. But are the New Atheists immune from being religious? Despite their disbelief in an objective God the belief system of the New Atheists is religious and bears the hallmarks of a religious mindset: Richard Dawkins, like Josef Stalin before him, is an evangelical atheist – he seeks to convert all to his religious perspective.

John F. Haught has attempted to categorize the beliefs of the New Atheists. First, apart from nature and humans, there is nothing else; in addition, nature is to be seen as self-originating. Second, the universe has no point; therefore nothing exists but natural causality. Third, all features of humanity can be explained by recourse to Darwinian processes. Fourth, in religious terms, faith in God has produced only evil in society and in terms of ethics, morality does not necessitate belief in a 'god'.⁷ This reductionist hermeneutic denies in effect personhood and the why of our consciousness—

‘The modernist world-view starts with the presupposition that the prime thing is inanimate cold matter just bouncing around with no values and then comes up with the problem of how by some weird series of coincidences this accidental little bit of delusory personhood happened to pop up inside our skulls, that’s the way round it goes. So for the modernist world-view, we are always the slightly weird exception to everything else – and the problem.’⁸

⁴ Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (2006), pp. 31–50.

⁵ Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (2006), pp. 32.

⁶ Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (2006), pp. 34.

⁷ John F. Haught (Senior Fellow of Science and Religion at the Woodstock Theological Centre, Georgetown University), *God and the New Atheism: A Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), pp. xiii–ix. A characteristic here is that the religio-cultural belief system of the so-called New Atheists is typically Postmodern in that not all subscribe to all the unwritten clauses in this anti-theistic proto-creed. Therefore some or all of what Haught asserts applies to the various New Atheists as individuals.

⁸ Revd Malcolm Guite, Chaplain of Girton College Cambridge, speaking on the BBC1 documentary, *The Narnia Code*, (broadcast on Thursday 16 April 2009, 23:35). This can be viewed at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00jz2qp#broadcasts>.

Michael Guite, speaking here, succinctly extrapolates how what we are made of is not what we are: to focus only on our physical constitution – the unwinding of DNA in the genome, the interaction of chemicals that constitute inanimate matter – this denies the ‘*ir-reducible mystery of my I-am-ness*.’⁹ This I-am-ness is personhood and it is personhood, full humanity, which the reductive ‘enlightened’ New Atheists seek to deny – selectively. The Roman Catholic theologian Tina Beattie in, *The New Atheists: the Twilight of Reason and the War on Religion*,¹⁰ has produced a sound critique of the arrogance and the lack of systematic rigour in the anti-God agenda of the New Atheists. For example, Beattie sympathizes with the New Atheists hostility to fundamentalism, but argues that they have fallen into the trap of a self-generated, we may even assert self-righteous, fundamentalism. Despite their avowed atheism, the New Atheists belief in the innocence and goodness of their anti-theistic ‘pseudo-religious’ belief system, is not new.

The aim of this paper is to explore how an Enlightenment theology of death is rooted in such religious atheism, a belief system that beguiles and deludes a particular group of people into believing that they are kind and considerate, liberal and good, while defining another group of people as non-human, or sub-human, and open to exploitation and destruction. This has led, inevitably, post-Reformation, to a revival of ancient Pagan sacrificial practices. Further I intend to show how although the New Atheists are quite correct in their criticism of human-centred religion they are blind to their own religiosity and the level of sacrificial death that the belief system their work has grown out of demands. The New Atheists are also as deluded as many clerical or priestly elites down the centuries into believing that their religio-cultural mindset is innocent and beneficial to humankind. Therefore I intend to demonstrate that underpinning this delusion is a proposition that religion is bad, atheism is worse, therefore religious atheism is to be seen as the worst of all positions.

2. Religion as Unbelief

First we need to establish some working definitions – of the Enlightenment and of religion. Secular liberal humanists today will invoke the Enlightenment with confidence, with religious certainty, exhibiting a glazed-eyed emotionalism akin to veneration. In broad terms the Enlightenment was a period in Western philosophy and cultural life, essentially in the eighteenth century, in which reason

⁹ Guite, *The Narnia Code* (2009).

¹⁰ Tina Beattie, *The New Atheists: the Twilight of Reason and the War on Religion* (London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 2007).

was elevated to be the principal source and authenticity, the ground for all decision-making, all authority, indeed every aspect of human life. Intellectuals, by and large, during the Age of Reason and the Enlightenment rejected a religious perspective substituting with what they saw as humanity's innate capacity to deal with life from its own strength through the faculty of reason: echoing the ancient Greek pre-Socratic philosopher Protagoras, this eighteenth-century white Western male oligarchic elite, confidently proclaimed that man was the measure of all.¹¹ And a definition of religion? There is in effect no generally agreed definition of religion. The term is used with widely different meanings – especially by the New Atheists. Cicero defined *religio* as the giving of proper honour, respect and reverence to the divine, by which he meant the 'gods'.¹² According to Cicero such 'religion', was a dutiful honouring of the 'gods', as distinct from a 'superstition', an empty fear of them.¹³ Cicero's definition implies an object – theistic religion will invoke God, or the 'gods', as the object of religious practice. But this object may only be in the mind of the believer. In addition, religion may embrace non-theistic belief systems from Buddhism to Marxism, or from football to popular culture, all of which exhibit the characteristics often associated with objectively theistic religions. The Enlightenment was innately 'religious', and spawned religious systems from Deism to Freemasonry. Perhaps any philosophy of life that exhibits a world view of sorts and that embraces some notion of right and wrong is in some way implicitly religious. Certainly, according to Postmodern relativism, almost anything can count as 'religion', any lifestyle statement as 'religious'. Karl Barth distinguished, dialectically, between religion and revelation. In stressing the sovereignty of God Barth denied, to a degree, knowledge of God through human effort. Therefore all religion was a human activity, human generated: for Barth God could only be 'known' by God's self-revealing, through revelation, in Jesus Christ. And the truth of this could only be accepted by faith. Religion at its best was to be seen as a flawed human response to the self-revelation of the one true living God. Therefore Barth asserts that we live under the divine judgement, God's judgement on all religion – *'Apart from and without Jesus Christ we can say*

¹¹ 'Man is the measure of all things: of things which are, that they are, and of things which are not, that they are not'. See, Sextus Empiricus (c. 2nd-3rd C. BC) in *Adversus Mathematicos (Against the Mathematicians)*, §7.60.

¹² Marcus Tullius Cicero, *The Nature of the gods* (trans and intro, Patrick Gerard Walsh; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 2.3.8; and Marcus Tullius Cicero, *The Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero, Volume IV: The Fourteen Orations Against Marcus Antonius; The Treatise on Rhetorical Invention; The Orator; Topics; On Rhetorical Partitions, Etc* (trans. C.D. Yonge; Dodo Press, 2008), 2.53.161.

¹³ Cicero, *The Nature of the gods*, 1.4.2.

nothing at all about God and man and their relationship one with another.¹⁴

The proposition from the New Atheists that all religions are of human invention and are self-serving is, therefore, in a Barthian context true. Likewise, the proposition from the New Atheists that all religions will oppress and even kill their opponents is, to a degree, true. If, like Barth, we are to regard religion, *per se*, as idolatrous, as unbelief, because it perpetually falls short of the unknowable aseity of the one true living God revealed in Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, then what do we classify as religion? Is belief in God, or for that matter a 'god' (note the lower case 'g'), an essential axiom of religion? No; for there is the phenomena of religious atheism. By comparison Barth saw the self-revealing of God – the paradoxical dialectic of an unveiling-veiling, as the abolition of all religion.¹⁵ This unveiling-veiling dialectic implies that we can never get religion right, even if we claim to be Christian. Therefore the New Atheists don't take their criticisms of religion far enough: they fail to criticise their own religion, their own religious atheism, their innate self reflective and self reverential religiosity – in a Feuerbachian context.

3. Enlightenment Death: Three Mega-Holocausts

If the New Atheists proposition is correct, that all religions will oppress and even kill their opponents, and if we can look at church history and see how Christians, whether lay or a priestly elite, have defined and measured people by certain criteria, externalizing them and subjecting them to exclusion and ultimately to torture and death, and if this behaviour is innate to religious humanity, then although we will be able to point to this same proposition in, Western, Enlightenment, Modern and Postmodern religion – whether atheistic or theistic – we must start with its evidence in an explicitly Christian context.

i. A Pseudo-'Christian' Theology of Death

An Enlightenment theology of death essentially grew out of the religious terrorism of the Reformation. We can look at Henry VIII's

¹⁴ See, Karl Barth, *The Church Dogmatics* (14 Vols; eds. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1936–77). See: §17 The Revelation of God as the Abolition of Religion I/2, p. 280; §25 The Fulfilment of the Knowledge of God II/1, p. 3; §26 The Knowability of God II/1, p. 63; §. 27, 'The Limits to the Knowledge of God', II/1, The Doctrine of God, specifically, pp. 179–256. Specific reference is made to, I.2, p. 299 and IV.1, p. 45.

¹⁵ Barth, *The Church Dogmatics* I/2, §17 The Revelation of God as the Abolition of Religion I/2, p. 280.

macho religio-political tyranny as almost comical but for the suffering and death it visited on the English people; the same can be said of Calvin's dictatorial theocratic rule of Geneva, but we must look specifically at the actions of the Roman Catholic church: for example, the burning alive of men, women and children because they refused to stop reading the Bible in English (or translating, or printing and distributing the Bible in the vernacular). The belief was in the equality before God of the so-called heretics, therefore for his or her own good the soul of such an individual needed cleansing with fire, in addition there was the religio-political necessity to stop the spread of bible reading and study outside of the authority of the church's control, which itself was related to the issue of indulgences and priestly power. In the 1520s the Inquisition in Seville would often hold a three-hour, intensely religious and emotional Mass, then go out and supervise an *auto-da-Fe* (literally an act of faith – the burning alive at the stake of usually 100 so-called heretics); the perpetrators were utterly convinced of the rightness of their actions, they acknowledged the full humanity of the victims and many of this priestly elite wept as they looked on. The religious roots of burning the victim alive at the stake were Pagan, as was the Protestant response – hanging, drawing and quartering. The roots of burning alive would appear superficially to lie with the wicker man amongst Celtic tribes and the middle Eastern and Indian dualist religions whose priests were convinced that whether alive or dead, certain people needed cleansing fire to redeem them, for the soul to escape the body. When this is translated to the *curia* and the Inquisition, or for that matter Protestant sects in the New World obsessed with the threat of witches and witchcraft, the protagonists had, in effect taken possession of the judgement and vengeance of God, hence usurping Christ's righteousness, acting as if they were God: *eritis sicut Deus*. One of the last victims of this pseudo-'Christian' theology of death was Thomas Aitkenhead, a twenty-one year old Scottish student executed in 1697 for blasphemy in promulgating atheistic views and for denouncing the Bible.¹⁶ Secular liberal humanists today never cease to sanctify Aitkenhead and proclaim him as evidence of the primitive and superstitious nature of religion. For the followers of the Enlightenment reason replaced religion, reason without revelation, to a degree; it was within this atheistic pseudo-religious agenda that we can identify the origin of a theology of death. But whereas the victims of the Inquisition and other pre-Enlightenment 'Christian' theocracies were deemed equally human and in need of purification unto death to be saved (in varying

¹⁶ Thomas Aitkenhead (1676–1697), a student from Edinburgh, was indicted in December 1696 and executed on 8 January 1697 for blasphemy; Aitkenhead is recorded as having pleaded for mercy during the trial and attempted to recant his views but was sentenced to death by hanging.

degrees according to the prevailing religious culture), the victims of an Enlightenment theology of death were deemed sub- or non-human and therefore as usable and disposable as the rest of creation.

ii. Slavery: 'Am I Not a Man and a Brother'

It is generally acknowledged that the numbers executed by and through the Reformation were probably in the tens of thousands across Europe, though objective evidence and accurate written records are scarce. Post-Reformation, the level of death by the exponents of these human-centred religio-political belief systems has measured in the tens of millions. For example, there have been three Enlightenment-led mega-holocausts since the Reformation. Why holocausts? – because the destruction and slaughter has been on a mass scale. The first was the holocaust of the West Africans – slaves. Black men, women and children from West Africa were defined as sub-human, usable and disposable. Respectable society in Britain – with endorsement from the Church of England in certain quarters – deemed this 'reasonable', acceptable, and economically unavoidable, indeed highly beneficial to the British economy. It is important to remember that this trade already existed – black enslaving black, with Arabs travelling across the Sahara Desert to purchase the commodity. However, the British slave traders simply ratcheted-up this trade into a mega-holocaust, using the technological developments of the Enlightenment. The dehumanization of enslaved West Africans was enshrined in law. There were often violent clashes between slaves and overseers, especially in the docks. In one case (a test case as it would be termed today) in the seventeenth century, a sailor from a ship docked in Jamaica killed a black slave in a drunken dockside brawl. He was not charged with murder but with gross damage to the slave owner's property. He had to pay compensation equivalent to the value of replacing the slave (indenture to the plantation owner for 10 years labour – however, he jumped ship and escaped). His crime was not considered to be the killing or murder of another human being. If a ship crossing from Africa to the West Indies was foundering in a storm the crew was allowed to do what they would on any other ship – ditch some of the cargo overboard to lighten the load and to save the ship. West African slaves were considered cargo not passengers, they were just another commodity – alive or dead they were thrown overboard to prevent the ship from foundering, they were claimed on insurance as cargo, not passengers, not human beings. As the body count climbed (more than 15 million), finally – after a couple of hundred years – people's consciences fought for a ban: the slogan or catch phrase of the abolitionists was 'Am I Not

a Man and a Brother', which was antonymous of the dehumanization policy of the Enlightened Europeans. English philosophers from the Age of Reason saw the slave trade as justified, 'reasonable', and beneficial according to the criteria of the ruling oligarchic elite. Slavery in pre-Civil War America, as also was the annihilation of Native Americans in the mid-West in the late nineteenth century, is related to and part of this holocaust, which was defined essentially along similar racial lines, as are the numerous other examples of racist-driven apartheid or ethnic cleansing, whether theistically or atheistically grounded, characterised by this principle of dehumanization. The Church of England implicitly endorsed the slave trade: in the eighteenth-century Anglican priests refused to baptize the children of black African slaves in the Caribbean because it would imply equality with the slave masters. Ironically the Roman Catholic missions in the New World were against slavery. In 1537 Pope Paul III issued the encyclical, *Sublimis Deus*, proclaiming the Native American Indians to be truly human beings with the full intellectual and moral capacity to become Christian and therefore Rome outlawed slavery.¹⁷ During the Reformation there was a clash between Roman Catholic missionaries and the profit-driven venture capitalism of the colonialists and conquistadores. The Jesuit missionaries saw all peoples as needing to be converted and saved, all were equal before God. It was in the Protestant and Reformed churches that the colonialists and empire builders were to find a belief system to complement their dehumanizing greed. It is in the Protestant countries that the churches develop a belief system to justify slavery, by classifying the native peoples of Africa, Asia, the Americas, as sub-human or non-human. The principle of dehumanization continues today and is, ironically, taken up by the secular liberal humanists.

¹⁷ In contradiction to *Dum Diversas* (1452) and *Romanus Pontifex* (1455), which granted the right of taking the 'natives' of newly discovered lands as perpetual slaves, because according to the Aristotelian derived anthropology humans were in three groups, Asian, Africans and Europeans, and therefore the 'Indians' of the New World were to be classified as 'dumb brutes' outside of and different from humanity, *Sublimis Dei* (1537) accepted them as fully and equally human because it was found that they could hear the Gospel and be converted to Christ. *Sublimis Dei* stated, '*The enemy of the human race... invented a means... by which he might hinder the preaching of God's word of Salvation to the people... that the Indians of the West and the South, and other people of whom we have recent knowledge should be treated as dumb brutes created for our service... the said Indians and all other people who may later be discovered by Christians, are by no means to be deprived of their liberty or the possession of their property, even though they be outside the faith of Jesus Christ; and that they may and should, freely and legitimately, enjoy their liberty and the possession of their property; nor should they be in any way enslaved.*' Extracts from, *Sublimis Dei*, encyclical on 'The Enslavement and Evangelization of Indians', issued by Pope Paul III, 29 May 1537, accessed at, <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Paul03/p3subli.htm>.

iii. The Holocaust of the God's Chosen People

The second mega-holocaust inspired, to a degree, by the Enlightenment was the holocaust of the Jews: again, an oligarchic elite defined a particular group of people as sub-human and then non-human, disposable. In a few years this holocaust claimed at least 7 million lives. Again, those who ruled, who democratically passed the laws (the Nazis), considered this reasonable. If some men or women were considered useful as slave labour then they were worked to death. The others were simply, systematically, herded into the gas chambers, killed, then processed for whatever was of value. The National Socialist religion, essentially scripted in the late 1920s by Wilhelm Stapel, was derived from Pagan religion, from ancient German and Norse mythologies, selectively rewritten, adapted, to suit the National Socialist racist agenda; this multiplicity of 'gods' and 'godlets' denied the God of the Jews and sought to recast Jesus as a white Aryan Enlightened European. However, in addition to its Pagan religious roots National Socialist religion – or religio-politics – also has impeccable Enlightenment credentials: National Socialism evolved, to a degree, from nineteenth century German thinkers such as Nietzsche, Feuerbach, and implicitly from Hegel.

But the churches also had their part in these mega-holocausts. The Methodist church in Germany initially praised Hitler because he had made the trains run on time. Lutheran Christian SS guards in the concentration camps held prayer meetings to thank their Lord for giving them the opportunity of solving the problem, as they saw it, of the Jews. Whether it was true or not, there was an apposite scene at the end of the BBC historical drama called *Conspiracy*, detailing the infamous 1942 Wannsee Conference. The SS General Reinhard Heydrich, with Machiavellian skill, plots with his fellow Nazis the final solution (the annihilation of the Jews) and then sits down to listen sensitively to the most soul-piercingly beautiful music by Schubert (the 2nd movement of the String Quintet in C) as if nothing was wrong, as if what had been achieved was the highest of truth. This is what should surely be defined as delusory – that all humanity can find itself buoyed-up, especially by religious or artistic emotionalism, into believing wrong is right, evil is good.

iv. The Silence of the Aborted

What of the third Enlightenment-inspired mega-holocaust? This is the holocaust of the unborn: the victims of abortion (and, related, embryonic stem cell harvesting). Again, a particular group of people are defined as sub-human or non-human and useable, disposable. The silence from this third holocaust is deafening: no child survives. Slavery

and discrimination against the Jews has always existed; Women have always sought to abort a so-called unwanted pregnancy – the ancient Celts, and the Anglo Saxons knew of certain plants where the leaves would trigger menstruation and therefore abort. However, since 1967 in Britain and 1973 in the USA this has received state sanctioning. There is a contemporary myth that all theology must be impersonal and academically disinterested. If you hold to this myth you will I hope forgive a personal testimony that makes the theological arguments highly pertinent? Prior to state sanctioning of the third Enlightenment mega-holocaust in Britain in 1967, a small number of children survived and knew, because their parents had the gall to tell them they had tried to kill them in the womb as unwanted. In the early 1950s my parents purchased under-the-counter medicine from a chemist's shop/drug store to trigger an abortion, on the premise that they could not afford another child, and when this failed, ensured that I knew of this on numerous occasions as I grew up. I was one of the lucky few – many were born brain damaged. Since the late-1960s the holocaust has been complete – no child survives. Should I have been killed in the womb so as to silence all opposition? Though an embryo of a few weeks gestation may seem insignificant it holds the complete life and loves, strengths and weaknesses of a person – in potential. Should I, and many others, have never been? Everything that I am was there in my mother's womb when my parents attempted to kill me 56 years ago. No, I was not a meaningless cluster of cells, take my word for it, my testimony is true, and no I wasn't waiting for a soul to be given to me to make me human, neither was I waiting to be born so I could claim human rights or citizenship.

Why has this third Enlightenment mega-holocaust arisen? Abortion is, for many, defined by the so-called 'right to choose', however, this is a misnomer: the woman's right to choose actually lies in the initial decision whether to mate or not. Pregnancy goes with mating; it is not an unwanted side-effect. Western governments interpret a women's 'right to choose' as relating to the decision of life or death over another human being, but do not extend this right to other citizens who seek to damage, exploit or destroy other, dehumanized, human beings. It is this existential autonomously defined 'right to choose' which, theologically, undergirds all three Enlightenment mega-holocausts: *eritis sicut Deus* – humanity acting as if it was God. If we are to defend a woman's 'right to choose', then we have no moral basis to criticize the Nazi's 'right to choose' whether the Jews lived or died? Neither have we any moral basis to criticize the 'right to choose' claimed by the British slave traders over our African brothers and sisters. We cannot pick and choose which crimes against humanity we endorse or repudiate. The 'right to choose', which is a gender based, non-inclusive, discriminatory, sectarian proposition, is a license to kill another human life. As a man many women would

say I have no right to comment, but I comment not as a man but as the survivor of an abortion. If I cannot speak, then the Jews who survived the holocaust must remain silent and not criticize the religious-political beliefs of their persecutors. The problem with the pro-choice lobby is that they are not 'liberal' or 'inclusive' enough: if they were 'liberal' and 'inclusive' they would grant equal human rights to the unborn and recognise the right to life from the moment of conception of a fully ensouled human life. Whatever the consequences, once life has started only God the creator, whose one complete sacrifice has atoned for our sins, has the right to end it – if we try to solve these problems ourselves we only make matters worse (Romans 7). Every abortion, every death of a child unborn, is a cry before God of innocent blood, wantonly spilled. These are my brothers and sisters in Christ, these my real blood relatives, for I survived but they were wasted:

'Whoever destroys a life, it is considered as if he destroyed an entire world.

And whoever saves a life, it is considered as if he saved an entire world.'¹⁸

By comparison to this axiomatic wisdom from the Talmud, Stalin is reputed to have said that one death is a tragedy, a million a statistic. We must not be blinded by the numbers: the scale of this third holocaust now out ranks the other two. A conservative body count for the Western world stands at 50 million since state sanctioned liberalisation in the late 1960s,¹⁹ but the West considers it reasonable behaviour – 'reasonable' according to the self-referential principles of the Enlightenment and the self-reverential beliefs of Postmodern relativism.

v. Defining Principles

There are certain important defining principles to these three mega-holocausts that we need to identify.

¹⁸ *Jerusalem Talmud*, Sanhedrin 4:8 (37a). The Talmud is considered an authoritative record of rabbinic discussions on Jewish law, Jewish ethics, customs, legends and stories. It consists of the Mishnah, a record of oral traditions, and the Gemara, which comments upon, interprets and applies these oral traditions.

¹⁹ Given that in Britain the last publically issued figure was 193,500 (2007), rising through 180,000 year on year since the mid-1990s, and given that the most recent statistic for the USA was 1.3 million (2005), given that these levels per head of population are similar across all countries in the Western world, then we may assume a figure of 2 million abortions per year. Assuming a base line in 1967 of zero (statistics are not available for the late 1960s but many women were queuing up to receive the new state sanctioned abortions), then given the exponential growth it is reasonable to propose a figure of 50 million children in the last 40 years.

First, the principle of dehumanization is rooted in both prejudice and in scientific naturalism. According to scientific naturalism all matter is equal; there is no inherent difference between a fertilized egg and the greatest artistic or scientific genius. If this proposition is followed through then whatever consciousness we have is an accident of evolution. According to a Darwinian inspired, or grounded, scientific naturalism all flesh is equal – equally valid and equally invalid. However, the exponents of the principle of dehumanization fail to follow this through logically and invent prejudiced principles to separate out some humans from the herd as sub- or non-human.²⁰ However, what of the victims within the Soviet state? Marxist-Leninist pseudo religious atheism wasted the lives of over 100 millions, for example in the farm collectivization programme of the 1930s, and in the Gulags, however, Marxism defined all people as equal: those who offended against the Soviet state (like those defined as heretical by the Roman Catholic church), were equally and fully human but in need of severe punishment and/or correction to redeem them before the state (or in Rome's case, before the church). Marxist-Leninism did not, in principle, subscribe to the dehumanization principle.

Second, each mega-holocaust operates peacefully and democratically within a nation state and its environs/colonies. The British Empire's slave traders straddled the world exploiting and dehumanizing, imposing a *pax britannica*, aping the Roman Empire's *pax romana*. The 1935 Nuremberg laws passed by the democratically elected National Socialist government defined the Aryan race and de-humanized, excluded, Jews and others from citizenship; Hitler wanted nothing more than to be left in peace to pursue his agenda of turning Europe into an Aryan colony free of sub- or non-humans, it was the allies that declared war. Therefore I have not included the victims of the two World Wars amongst other twentieth century conflicts here (all-out war has few principles, and an innate disrespect for life). The exponents of these three mega-holocausts invent dehumanizing religious-political criteria, and then merely want to go about their business peacefully without interference from outside.

Third, that technology and scientific developments, issuing essentially from the Age of reason and the Enlightenment, have been essential in generating the high levels of death within each holocaust: modern medical procedures allow for the sheer scale of unborn children killed, likewise, the Nazis struggled during 1941 and 1942 to perfect the technology to facilitate the scale of killing and the

²⁰ Richard Dawkins argues in the context of the stem-cell debate, that it is right to dissect, analyze and harvest stem-cells from people in their embryonic state because there is no innate value to life, and yet his web site and forum constantly beseech us to value *adult* and *intellectual* life: again, the selective dehumanization principle.

processing of the corpses in the concentration camps. The Caribbean plantations and the slave triangle was built on early industrialization, the production and trafficking of goods over vast distances, the technological developments in sailing and navigation, all this contributed to the mass movement of millions of West African slaves.

Fourth, *onus probandi*, the burden of proof, teleologically, should be for the perpetrators to prove that the object of their killing is not human, whereas West Africans, the Jews, or unborn children were effectively put in the position of having to prove that they are human and equal.

4. An Hypostatic Union without Confusion

What we have identified so far is an underlying principle, that of denying humanity to others, objectifying others as sub-human, then non-human, allowing the protagonist to use, abuse and kill at will: this was applied to West Africans by the British slave traders, it was applied by the Nazis to the Jews (and the Slaves, Gypsies and homosexuals), and today by secular liberal humanists and the New Atheists to unborn children. There are of course many other examples of ethnic cleansing, tribal wars, and slavery that reflect this principle of dehumanization, however, given its current status as approved by Western societies and governments we need to consider what the theology is behind both the endorsement and the repudiation of this third Enlightenment mega-holocaust, and how these arguments relate to the other Enlightenment mega-holocausts.

i. Immediate Animation

This dehumanization principle is endemic in humanity. We may argue that the Christian churches began to deny it – to assert the full humanity of all, *in Christ*. For example, the Apostle Paul extending the Gospel to the gentiles, or encouraging Philemon to take Onesimus, the runaway slave and convert, back on equal terms, whereby master and runaway slave were to stand within the church as one and the same.²¹ However, the church failed to develop this precedent for centuries; the churches failed to assert the complete unity of brotherhood and sisterhood throughout all humanity, throughout each and every life, as an immovably axiomatic principle. Theologians have taken various positions over the last two thousand years: reasserting full humanity – in the face of slavery, pogroms, infanticide, anything

²¹ The Letter to Philemon. See: specifically 1:15–16.

which denigrates and dehumanizes – appears a never ending task. The seventh century Patristic theologian Maximus the Confessor (c.580–662) worked out a systematic theological justification for the full humanity of each person from the point of conception, although this was in the context of the Incarnation, and in refuting the Monothelite controversy. Maximus's ontology of the human is intertwined with his Christology: if Christ as God incarnate is fully human and at one with us then Jesus Christ must have been fully human from the point of conception.²² The second person of the Trinity was incarnated human, therefore there can not have been a time – when incarnated – that he was not human. Jesus Christ must have been human *from the point of conception*. There cannot have been a time after fertilization when Christ was not human but some form of sub-human animal life, and if there is a time after fertilization when we are not human (i.e. not ensouled), if we are not human from the moment of conception but Jesus Christ was, then we are not completely at one with Christ and therefore our salvation is imperilled because Christ does not fully share our humanity. This is apart from the fact that each and every human is genetically human from the point of conception. Humanity may attribute a different status to each human in the first few weeks of life in the womb, but this does not alter what they are before God: human ontology is divinely bequeathed, a gift, it is not selectively defined by the human will.

In human terms the origin of each person had been established according to rather spurious grounds by Aristotle, amongst other ancient Greek philosopher-scientists.²³ However, this position must be seen as flawed and wrong in the light of scriptural revelation and

²² On the question of the moment at which soul and body are united, Maximus wrote in the *Second Ambigua* to contradict earlier teachings (for example, the Origenist teaching that the soul exists before the body, also, the Aristotelian teaching that the body exist before the soul) and to deal with certain ambiguities in Gregory of Nazianzus' writings. Maximus rejected both, asserting, Christologically, that soul is created by God and infused into the body in the very instant of conception. See: Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua*, 2, in J.P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Graeca* (161 Vols.; Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1857–1666). See *Ambigua* 2.42, in, Vol. 91, 1324C. See also, 2.7, in, Vol. 91, 1101A; also, references to Maximus in Vol. 3 & 4. For a modern translation see, George C. Berthold (ed.) *Maximus Confessor: Selected Writings* (Classics of Western Spirituality; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985). For modern scholarship on Maximus and these issues see, Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2003), and, Adam G. Cooper, *The Body in St Maximus Confessor: Holy Flesh, Wholly Deified* (Series, Oxford Early Christian Studies; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). An excellent summary of these body-soul, conception, questions can be found in, John Saward, *Redeemer in the Womb* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1993), pp. 3–21.

²³ An Aristotelian proposition endorsed by Aquinas, was that the humanity and personhood was not there from the moment of conception, some other animal life was. Aquinas takes this further and asserts delayed ensoulment, or postponed animation (that the soul is only given to the human after several weeks of development in the womb). See: Saward, *Redeemer in the Womb* (1993), p. 13–21.

theological argument. Maximus the Confessor asked what does the moment of the Incarnation reveal:

It confirmed what he already believed on other grounds, namely, that the rational soul of man, which is not generated by the parents, is created immediately by God and infused into the body at the moment of conception (in modern jargon, the doctrine of ‘immediate animation’).²⁴

For Maximus, contrary to a drift amongst many church theologians by the seventh century who were beginning to see a human as a soul using a body, he reasserted the scriptural axiom that all men and women are a unity of soul and body: a psychosomatic whole (i.e. from the NT Greek - *psyche* and *soma*). Maximus uses the term *eidos holon*, a ‘complete whole’, a ‘complete entity’, or, *ekplerosis* - completeness. The Greek *holos* implies that something is simultaneously a whole and a part, hence Maximus’s uses of the term evokes dialectic and paradox – the soul and body are simultaneously parts and a whole, a complete entity, yet separately divisible and identifiable; *holos* also states that something is a whole in itself, altogether, as well as a part of a larger system:²⁵ the psychosomatic unity of soul and body that is a person is autonomous, to a degree, yet exists and subsists in God. This wholeness is from the beginning, from the moment of conception: what is true for humanity is true for the Christ. What is true for Jesus born of Mary is true for all men and women. If Christ Jesus’ soul was not the result of immediate animation, then his humanity is optional; furthermore, Maximus identified that behind the theory of later ensoulment was a Manichee aversion, a loathing, a repugnance, for associating the higher elements of the human – the intellect, and so on – with the messiness of sex and bodily fluids.²⁶ This Manichee aversion begins to deny the Incarnation, deny that the Word was made flesh: delayed ensoulment points to a Docetic Christ, a Christ who *seems* to be human, fleshly, but is really only inhabiting a human form temporarily. Delayed animation asserts a part-time Christ not fully at one with us. But more than this, a doctrine of immediate animation means that all the victims of the Enlightenment mega-holocausts are fully human and at one with

²⁴ Saward, *Redeemer in the Womb* (1993), p. 8.

²⁵ In terms of twentieth century philosophy, a *holon* is simultaneously a whole and a part and refers to phenomena that are whole in themselves, but are also part of a larger system, a *Holon* is embedded in larger *holons*, which influence it whilst it influences the greater. A model of this is sub-atomic particles, molecules, matter and objects, and the universe.

²⁶ Maximus the Confessor, Ambigua 2.42, in, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. 91, 1337B-1340B. In Postmodern secular liberal humanist terms this repugnance is translated into a refusal to accept that sexual intercourse is, in many ways, primarily about creating a new person, a new life: secular liberal humanists divorce pregnancy from the act of copulation.

the rest of humanity and, importantly, with Christ, and not separated out into a non-human sub-species.

ii. The Full Humanity of the Child-Person from Conception

Western liberal democracies generally define the start of a human life at the point of birth (though there is confusion about the state of a child in the womb depending on its age and development). The question of personhood doesn't enter into the debate. Scripture defines the start of a human life as the moment of conception. The Psalmists proclaimed the full existence of a human life from the moment of conception, and how this life related to God:

Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom
in that secret place.²⁷

Furthermore, the very process of creation and gestation was blessed:

For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb . . .

My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place.

When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,
your eyes saw my unformed body.

All the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.²⁸

The Prophet Jeremiah takes this further. God knew the child in full personhood: '*Before I formed you in the womb*' the Lord commands, '*I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.*'²⁹ John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit whilst in his mother's womb – this was part of his full humanity.³⁰ The Apostle Paul was set apart even from his mother's womb.³¹ If this is true of John the Baptist and the Apostle Paul it is equally true of all people. It is equality before God that is the touchstone of the argument against the Enlightenment mega-holocausts; it is equality that the Western secular liberal humanists and the New Atheists claim to practice but they do not. Scripture shows us that theologically discriminating against, black or white, slave or free, male or female, born or unborn, or discriminating

²⁷ Psalm 51:6.

²⁸ Psalm 139:13, & 15–16.

²⁹ Jeremiah 1:5.

³⁰ 'Even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit' Luke 1:15. 'He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.' Luke 1:15–16.

³¹ 'But when *He* who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace . . .' Galatians 1:15.

on grounds of lifestyle or behaviour, is wrong before God in Christ: reductionist dehumanization should be seen as anathema, as a thing devoted to evil.

5. The Theological Roots of the Enlightenment Mega-Holocausts

The theological roots of the three Enlightenment mega-holocausts can be found in Genesis 3: the Fall from grace, the descent into original sin – humanity has taken on to itself all decision making, having eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil: Eve and Adam's sin was to choose, to be invited by personified evil to claim the 'right to choose'. This right to choose is self referential and issues from the Fall from grace – this 'right to choose' is at the heart of original sin. Humanity no longer lives in God's grace, hence when it believes it is doing the good it is not, it fails (Romans 7). But it does not acknowledge this failure; it deludes itself by judging others. Therefore the theological roots of the Enlightenment mega-holocausts lie in a theology of death where humanity, through original sin, deludes itself into believing it is doing the right, the good, when it is sinning and committing evil atrocities. This is so when enslaving and working to death West Africans, or when seeking to annihilate the Jews in gas chambers, or when killing the unborn.

In many ways what has occurred since the Reformation is comparable in certain aspects with ancient Pagan child sacrifice. For example, Inca child sacrifice was undertaken with thought, consideration, and religious seriousness, it was undertaken with piety and surrounded with liturgical conviction, with utter conviction that the course undertaken was right (comparable with a Roman Catholic *auto-da-Fe*, or the Calvinistic Scottish elders executing Thomas Aitkenhead?).³² My mother was persuaded of the rightness of my father's request that they should sacrifice me. When the under-the-counter medicines

³² Inca child sacrifice probably amounted to know more that 3 to 5 children per year. Evidence about *Capacacha*, the sacred Inca ceremony of human sacrifice, is essentially from two sources: the accounts written by Jesuits in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and from each newly discovered mummy. The ritual sacrifices were intricate and of great importance. The sacrifice had to be of a child – for purity (including physical perfection). The worship of mountains as 'gods', and the elaborate burial procedures involved, elevated the status and ontology of the sacrificed child to that of a deity, at one with the 'gods'. The sacrifice was usually that of a chieftain's child or even the off-spring of the Inca Emperor – these people were considered to be descendants of the Sun 'god'. The child to be sacrificed would be fed a maize alcohol (*chicha*) to numb pain from exposure and the altitude. Liturgical ritual at the place of the cairn on the mountain top led to the child being enveloped in ceremonial clothing and incarcerated in the cairn-tomb, guarded by sacred artefacts, and left to die of exposure. According to the Jesuitical records-accounts this was done to appease the 'gods', and to prevent the world collapsing into chaos.

failed my father went back for more, after all, once these ‘gods’ have demanded sacrifice there is no appeasing them until they have drunk of a child’s blood. But the pharmacist was on his summer holiday – so my father had to wait for his return. This time my mother bled for two days. But I survived.³³ I thank God that I know (both from my parents and from discussion with my mother’s friends) – after all is said and done I know how Isaac felt!

Sacrifices – whether children or animals – were undertaken to appease the ‘gods’ and to prevent the end of the world on a communal scale. Whatever the aims an important part of Pre-Enlightenment Pagan sacrifice was that the child was fully human. By comparison the three Enlightenment sacrificial mega-holocausts work by reducing or denying the full humanity of the victims, although in the case of the sacrificial offering of the unborn, Postmodern relativism ensures this denial varies with each death, and any contradictions are ignored. For example, stem cells are harvested from what is defined as a sub- or non-human embryonic person, because they are considered to be of immense value to curing diseased and corrupted adults (the sacrifice of the embryonic person to prevent the end of the world of the adult, which is a central principle of Pagan sacrifice). However, not only are the stem cells of value because the embryonic person is fully human, they are harvested as of immense value because the embryo is actually super-human – it contains characteristics that transcend the merely mortal nature of adult humanity (which again confirms the Pagan religious ground underpinning such sacrificial practice). Whatever the individual aims these Enlightenment mega-holocausts are sacrificial because they are undertaken to stop the world ending. The third Enlightenment mega-holocaust is individualistic and lacks the communal element that characterized ancient Pagan sacrifice, though both seek to prevent the world of the individual or the community ending. The third mega-holocaust is characterized by autonomous consequentialist ethics; Inca child sacrifice was characterized by heteronomous communitarian ethics.

³³ I have suffered from Ménières disease (tinnitus, vertigo and deafness) all my life. This is a disease which is supposed to come on in adults (usually in their twenties), it is not known in children. Because I was born at the end of January 1954, my conception would have been, for arguments sake, on 1 May 1953. If the chemist was on his summer holiday between my father’s first purchase and the subsequent second dose of the aborting medicine, this would point to some time between mid July and the end of August (this was the traditional time for the English middle class professionals to take their single annual holiday) in the 1950s. An unborn child’s brain-nervous system is highly sensitive and susceptible to environmental damage – especially from chemicals – during the period two-and-a-half months to four months into development in the womb: was this Ménières type disease inflicted on me by the aborting medicine?

6. Cain and Abel

The tide of secularization in the West over the last forty years has led to Christian groups once considered hostile to each other (Evangelicals and Roman Catholics, for instance) to huddle together in relative unity in the face of a Postmodern liberal humanist secular society that espouses an agenda obsessed with lifestyle and individual identity, by consumerism, a society justified not by Christ's atoning sacrifice but by protectionist killing (in recent times, the Iraq-Afghanistan wars, abortion, stem-cell research, vivisection, suicide, euthanasia, etc.): the boundaries between the various theologies of death that constitute these Enlightenment mega-holocausts are, in Postmodern relativistic terms, blurred. This is a culture of death, which in the last forty years appears to have overturned and rejected, inverted, everything that was characteristic of a Christian society.³⁴ In rejecting Christ's propitiatory atoning sacrifice, in rejecting penal substitution, in rejecting the concept of punishment, and therefore the completeness of Christ's death on the cross, the West has generated and endorsed the revival of Pagan sacrifice on an industrial scale. The exponents look to the splinter in the eye of the historic church whilst ignoring the tree trunk of Pagan sacrifice in their own eye. The churches may have been insufficient representatives of Christ's atoning sacrifice in the past, but does not the secular liberal humanist delusion make their faults pale by comparison?³⁵

How do we respond to this theology of death? The Swiss theologian Karl Barth outlined the eschatology of this in his second commentary on Romans in the context of the 1917 Marxist revolution that had just taken place in Russia, and in relation to Dostoevsky's *Grand Inquisitor*: where the revolutionary is not to be seen sympathetically as the Christ who stands before the Grand Inquisitor, but is, contrariwise, the Grand Inquisitor encountered by the Christ.

³⁴ Pro-choice abortionists, particularly in the USA, call for plurality – the idea that different views should live alongside each other without attempting to contradict each other. Is the question of the third Enlightenment mega-holocaust, as with the first two (The Slave Trade and the Holocaust), simply a question of opinion? No. The measure is the level of death subscribed to – the level of protectionist killing. The Slave Trade and the Holocaust of the Jews demanded a level of death rarely seen before; the same is true with abortion since state sanctioning. The resulting delusion inverts the truth. The abolitionists – for example William Wilberforce – opposed the enslavement and death of Africans from an Evangelical perspective; the pro-life lobby often oppose abortion from a Roman Catholic-Evangelical perspective: in both cases abolitionists and anti-abortionists oppose death, oppose protectionist killing, arguing for equality before God. The measure of right or wrong is in the level of death subscribed to. Pluralism, in this instance, merely endorses death.

³⁵ Cf, Matthew 7:3–5 & Luke 6:41–42.

'The revolutionary must, however, own that in adopting his plan he allows himself to be overcome by evil. He forgets that he is not the One, that he is not the subject of the freedom, which he so earnestly desires, that, for all the strange brightness of his eyes, he is not the Christ who stands before the grand inquisitor, but is, contrariwise, the grand inquisitor encountered by the Christ. He too is claiming what no man can claim. He too is making of the right a thing. He too confronts other men with his supposed right. He too usurps a position which is not due to him, a legality which is fundamentally illegal, an authority which – as we have grimly experienced in Bolshevism, but also in the behaviour of far more delicate-minded innovators! – soon displays its essential tyranny.'³⁶

Therefore we may postulate that when Catholics stood before Protestants and were executed (for instance in the Thirty Years War) they were at one with Christ. Likewise when Protestants, or so-called heretics, stood before the inquisition and were burned alive they were also at one with Christ – the perpetrators being of the devil because they usurped the righteousness of God and acted *eritis sicut Deus*? Are all such perpetrators, whether the British slave traders, the Nazi SS guards at the death camps, or today's abortionists at one with Pilate in judging and condemning Jesus, or Herod in the Massacre of the Innocents?³⁷ There is no space for compromise here – either we are the victims at one with Christ, or we are the perpetrators at one with Pilate and Herod. We are all either Cain or Abel: humanity, not God, defined this dualistic distinction. Like Cain's sin, the Enlightenment holocausts are intertwined with pseudo-religious, self-justification. In the Enlightenment mega-holocausts the protagonists focus on the base elements of the human – uncontrolled and indulgent passion – as Cain did in killing Abel. The story of Cain and Abel is about acceptable and unacceptable sacrifice, good and bad religion. Cain rejects God's wisdom and makes a sacrifice of his brother: this human solution to the question of right religion has echoed through the Enlightenment mega-holocausts. Cain and his spiritual progeny exhibit selfishness, jealousy and aggression; they are divorced from the higher 'human' nature characterized by altruistic love, they reject God's judgement on their innate religiosity, therefore they reject the wisdom of God. In so doing they dehumanize first the object of their religious hatred, then they dehumanize themselves (for example the exponents of apartheid in South Africa and in the United States in the decades after the Second World War). By dehumanizing, by classifying some people as sub- or non human, the elite merely dehumanize themselves. Therefore we may ask, 'To what degree

³⁶ Karl Barth *The Epistle to the Romans* (trans. Sir Edwyn Hoskyns, 1933), Oxford: OUP, 1968, p. 480. (German edition, *Der Römerbrief* (1919) p. 505.

³⁷ John 18:31 and Matthew 2:16–18.

do the protagonists close themselves off to the redeeming influence of the Holy Spirit?' The measure is always death – the degree to which death, and dehumanization, is subscribed to and used as an attempt at protectionist self-justification. This is why – to explore the theo-logic in Barth's axiom – the revolutionary is not the Christ, the lamb, the victim, before the Grand Inquisitor, but was the oppressor, dehumanizing his or her victims. Therefore, a crusade, or jihad, against such holocausts merely endorses this theology of death. It is wrong and anathema to firebomb abortion clinics, vivisection laboratories, it is evil to assassinate doctors who perform abortions. Such actions merely play into their hands: those who live by the sword die by the sword and no one is righteous. Being Pharisaic or puritanical merely generates self-righteousness and the impossibility of living up to the law. All we can do is speak out, even if this leads to censorship and persecution, to draw a line, to try to persuade people through argument, through God's truth, to refuse to sanction the escalating body count in the multitudinous Enlightenment holocausts that have plagued the world for more than three hundred years.

7. Conclusion

Humanity is excellent at convincing itself of the rightness of any course of action it wishes to follow and inventing religious justification for such action. We must always acknowledge that there is distance between God in Christ and our religion because we are Fallen. If religion is inexorably corrupted and we will all face eschatological judgement, then ethics is all that is left. We may assert we have faith in Christ but this does not necessarily validate our ethics (Matthew 7:21 & 25, specifically vv. 31–46). We must recognise this space – otherwise how do we explain the sins of the church?

So what is the answer? There is only one answer, to repent and accept Christ's forgiveness wrought through his atoning propitiatory sacrifice. We have barely begun to understand and accept the completeness of Christ's atoning sacrifice. The punishment and the price for the alienation and distance caused by sin has been paid; it is the author of the Book of Isaiah writing hundreds of years before the Cross who perceived this axiomatic truth – *'He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.'* (Isaiah 53:1–5) To paraphrase and extend the Apostle Paul's incisive and inclusive eschatological sociology of the Cross, Christ's punishment was in the place of, and related to all humanity, whether Greek or Jew, black or white, slave or free, male or female, but also born or unborn, all, regardless of culture, religion, lifestyle or behaviour. We

will all, equally and inclusively, be raised in judgement by, through and in Christ. We must trust in the blood of the lamb not in the blood of Enlightenment Pagan sacrifices.

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